

data hacking: situations

Semantics 3, UCLA Linguistics

Spring 2022

1 today's goals

- how do times, events, and worlds interact?
 - how do they interact morphosyntactically?
 - how do they interact semantically?
- what are the benefits of having certain basic types in our ontology?
 - what are the benefits of having events?
 - what are the benefits of having possible worlds?
 - what are the benefits of having times?

2 issues with putative events

- what types of verbs select for events (as opposed to individuals)?
 - (how do we know?)
- (1) a. Beryl saw Meryl feed slop to the animals.
 b. Beryl saw that Meryl fed slop to the animals.
- what does this difference have to do with possible worlds?
 - what does this difference have to do with evidence type?
- how might we analyze this using events and possible worlds?

3 issues with putative possible worlds

- are there any downsides of possible world semantics as we know it?
 - (what is a commonly-known alternative to possible world semantics?)
 - how do we use possible worlds to model attitude reports?
 - (what's an attitude report?)
- (2) a. Ralph believes that Orcutt is a spy.
 b. The butler suspects that Milford saved the judge's life.
- cases of mistaken belief and Gettier cases (Gettier, 1963)

(Quine, 1956)
(Kratzer, 1998)

4 issues with putative times

- a witness pops her head into a room and is later questioned by a judge:
 - (3) a. There was a book on the table. It was in Russian.
 - b. There was a book on the table. It is in Russian.
 - c. There was a book on the table. It would have been in Russian.
- what's the relationship between topic and quantifier domain restriction?
 - what are instances of quantifier domain restriction?
 - is there any reason to extend QDR to modals? tenses?

5 sidebar: contextual domain restriction

- what is contextual domain restriction?
 - (4) a. No one is sleeping.
 - b. The bear might be a grizzly.
 - c. I am the cook.
- how is contextual domain restriction usually dealt with (Sennet, 2011)?
- (what about (4-c)?)

6 sidebar: topic

- Austin (1962): utterances are about “focus situations”
- what do we know about topic these days in natural language semantics?
- (what do we know about salience?)¹

References

- Austin, J. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Harvard University Press.
- Gettier, E. (1963). Is justified true belief knowledge? *Analysis*, 23:121–123.
- Kehler, A., Kertz, L., Rohde, H., and Elman, J. (2008). Coherence and coreference revisited. *Journal of Semantics*, 25:1–44.
- Kratzer, A. (1998). Scope or pseudoscope? are there wide-scope indefinites?
- Quine, W. (1956). Quantifiers and propositional attitudes. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 53:177–187.
- Sennet, A. (2011). Unarticulated constituents and propositional structure. *Mind and Language*, 26:412–435.

¹If you're interested in the role of salience in anaphora resolution – including ellipsis and gapping – read Andy Kehler's work, perhaps in particular Kehler et al. (2008).